



THE  
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By Mr. T O W N,  
CRITIC and CENSOR-GENERAL.

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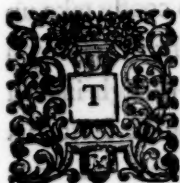
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THURSDAY, *August* 15, 1754.

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*Gaudet scribentes, et se venerantur, adorant.*

HOR.



H A T there is a vanity inherent in every author must be confessed, whatever pains they may take to conceal it from the rest of mankind. For my own part, I readily acknowledge, that I am always wonderfully delighted with my own productions. I snatch up the favourite sheets wet from the press, and devour every syllable: not the least particle escapes my notice, and I dwell with admiration on the beauties of an expressive *and* or emphatical *the*. If every reader was to pay the same at-

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tention,

tention to my works, or peruse them with half the satisfaction, Mr. TOWN might be fairly pronounced the greatest author of the age. But I am afraid I shall scarce find another who will so heartily join in the good opinion I have conceived of myself; and many a choice sentiment, many a culled expression, which I have repeated to myself over and over again with extacy, has by others perhaps been as hastily hurried over as any common article in a news-paper.

AN Author, who is ever big with the idea of his own importance, will gather matter for self-flattery from the most trivial circumstances. On the mornings of publication I have sometimes made it my business to go round the coffee houses, in order to receive whatever increase of praise I could collect from the approbation of my readers. My heart you may imagine has bounded with joy, when I have heard the room echo with calling for the CONNOISSEUR: but how has it sunk again, when I have found the same tokens of esteem shewn to a brother writer! I could have hugged any honest fellow, that has chuckled over my performances, and pointed out my good things:—but I have been no less chagrined, when I have seen a coxcomb coolly take up my paper, squint over the first page, and throw it down again with all the indifference imaginable: though indeed I have never failed within myself to pronounce on such a person, that he is dull, ignorant and illiterate. I once happened to be seated in the next box to two noted critics, who were looking over the file of my papers, and seemed particularly pleased with several parts of them. I immediately conceived a very high opinion of their taste and judgment: I remarked with singular satisfaction the effect which my wit and humour had on their countenances;

ces; and as they turned over the pages, I imagined I could point out the very passages, which provoked them frequently to smile, and sometimes to burst into a loud laugh. As soon as they were gone, I seized the file; when lo! to my great mortification I found they had been reading, not my own admirable works, but the lucubrations of a brother essayist.

My vanity has often prompted me to wish, that I could accompany my papers wheresoever they are circulated. I flatter myself I should then be introduced to the politest men of quality, and admitted into the closets of our finest ladies. This consideration would doubtless make me vain of myself: but my pride would be soon checked by reflecting further, that were I obliged to follow my papers afterwards through all their travels and mutations, I should certainly undergo the shame of seeing some of them prostituted to the vilest purposes. If in one place I might be pleased to find them the entertainment of the tea-table, in another I should be no less vexed to see them degraded to the base office of sticking up candles. Such is the fatality attending these loose sheets, that though at their first publication they may be thought as precious as the *Sibyl's* leaves, the next moment they may be thrown aside as no better than a last year's almanack.

EVER since my first appearance in a sheet and a half I have felt great uneasiness on account of the rude treatment, which my works have been subject to in their present form. I turned off my printer for a very heinous affront offered to my delicacy, having detected some foul proofs of my first numbers lodged in a very unseemly

seemly place; and I almost came to an open rupture with my publisher, because his wife had converted a supernumerary half-sheet into a thread-paper. A lady, whose sense and beauty I had always admired, forfeited my esteem at once by cutting out a pattern for a cap from one of my papers; and a young fellow, who had spoken very handsomely of one of my essays, made no scruple to defile the blank margin with a filthy list of foul shirts and dirty stockings. The repeated abuses of illiterate bakers, pastry-cooks, and chandlers I know I am condemned to suffer in common with other mortal writers. It was ever their privilege to prey indiscriminately on all authors good or bad: and as politicians, wits, freethinkers, and divines, may have their dust mingled in the same piece of ground, so may their works be jumbled together in the lining of the same trunk or band-box.

ONE instance may indeed be brought, in which I am used to hail as a lucky omen the damages that my papers appear to have sustained in their outward form and complexion. With what raptures have I traced the progress of my fame, while I have contemplated my numbers in the public coffee-houses strung upon a file, and swelling gradually into a little volume! By the appearance which they make, when thus collected, I have often judged of the reception they have singly met with from their readers: I have considered every speck of dirt as a mark of reputation, and have assumed to myself applause from the spilling of coffee or the print of a greasy thumb. In a word, I look upon each paper, when torn and sullied by frequent handling, as an old soldier battered in the service, and covered with honourable scars.

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I WAS led into this train of thought by an accident which happened to me the other evening, as I was walking in some fields near the town. As I went along my curiosity tempted me to examine the materials of which several paper kites were made up, from whence I had sufficient room to moralize on the ill fate of authors. On one I discovered several pages of a sermon expanded over the surface; on another the wings fluttered with love songs; and a satire on the ministry furnished another with ballast for the tail. I at length happened to cast my eye on one taller than the rest, and beheld several of my own darling productions pasted over it. My indignation was presently raised, that I should become the plaything of children; and I was even ashamed that the great name of TOWN, which stared me full in the front, should be exposed, like the compositions of Dr. Rock on the wall, to every idle gazer. However, by a curious turn of thought I converted what at first seemed a disgrace into a compliment to my vanity. As the kite rose into the air, I drew a flattering parallel between the height of its flight, and the soaring of my own reputation: I imagined myself lifted up on the wings of fame, and like *Horace's* Swan towering above mortality: I fancied myself borne like a blazing star among the clouds, to the admiration of the gazing multitude below.

— — — — *via est, quâ me quoque possim  
Tollere humo, victorque virum volitare per ora.*

VIRGIL.

N n n

W H I L E

WHILE I was indulging this fantastic contemplation of my own excellence, I never considered by how slight a thread my chimærical importance was supported. The twine broke; and the kite, together with my airy dreams of immortality, dropt to the ground.

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*\*\*\* We should be glad to know how a Note may be directed to G. K.*